

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (cancelled) An apparatus for treating a region of patient tissue, wherein the tissue has a surface, the apparatus comprising: an accessing tool for accessing the region, the accessing tool having a distal end and a proximal end and being manipulable from the proximal end to place the distal end in contact with the region; a shaft disposed proximate the distal end of the accessing tool; a cap member coupled to the shaft and disposed at the distal end of the accessing tool; a support member having an opening therein for receiving the shaft therethrough, the shaft extending through the opening, and the support member being capable of being positioned near or in contact with a proximal-facing side of the cap member; and one or more pressure transducer elements coupled to the support member or to the cap member at one or more locations surrounding the shaft; wherein, during operation of the accessing tool, at least one of the one or more pressure transducer elements, in response to a force applied to the cap member by the region, generates one or more information signals.
2. (cancelled) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the one or more information signals are indicative of the magnitude of the force applied to the cap member.
3. (cancelled) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein a plurality of pressure transducer elements are coupled to the support member or the cap member and at least partially surround the shaft.
4. (new) A method of positioning a medical apparatus within a patient, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) providing the medical apparatus comprising an accessing tool, and a probe operatively connected with the accessing tool and located at the distal end of the accessing tool, wherein the probe comprises at least one pressure transducer;
 - (b) inserting at least a portion of the accessing tool into the patient;
 - (c) manipulating the accessing tool until the distal end of the accessing tool is adjacent a body site;
 - (d) contacting the body site with the probe in a first position, thereby generating a first information signal from the at least one pressure transducer; and

(e) altering the position of the probe based at least in part on the first signal to a second position, thereby generating a second information signal.

5. (new) The method of claim 4, wherein the second position is a desired position of the probe in relation to the body site.

6. (new) The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of altering the positioning of the probe based at least in part on the second signal to a third position, thereby generating a third information signal.

7. (new) The method of claim 4, wherein the information from at least the first signal conveys the incident angle of the probe relative to a surface of the body site.

8. (new) The method of claim 4, wherein the first signal conveys the magnitude of a force applied by the body site on the probe.

9. (new) The method of claim 4, wherein the first signal conveys the direction of a force applied by the body site on the probe.

10. (new) The method of claim 4, wherein the apparatus further comprises a monitoring device, and wherein the first signal is displayed via the monitoring device.

11. (new) The method of claim 4, wherein the probe further comprises at least one effector configured to provide a therapeutic effect.

12. (new) The method of claim 11, wherein the probe further comprises an activator, and wherein the activator is associated with the effector such that the activation of the activator causes the effector to provide a therapeutic effect.

13. (new) The method of claim 11, wherein the effector is configured to provide a therapeutic effect upon the reaching of a threshold force measured by the at least one pressure transducer.

14. (new) The method of claim 4, wherein the accessing tool is inserted in step (b) using a catheter.

15. (new) The method of claim 4, wherein the manipulation of the accessing tool in step (c) is aided by the use of x-ray fluoroscopy.

16. (new) The method of claim 4, wherein the probe further comprises a support member, and wherein at least one pressure transducer is situated on the support member.

17. (new) The method of claim 4, wherein the accessing tool further comprises a shaft located near the distal end of the accessing tool, and wherein the shaft is movable relative to the accessing tool.

18. (new) The method of claim 17, wherein said pressure transducer includes (i) first and second conductors, (ii) an insulating layer adjacent the first conductor, said layer having one or more perforations therein, and (iii) a conductive elastomer disposed between the insulating layer and the second conductor and in contact with the second conductor; and the insulating layer and the conductive elastomer each (i) is mounted about the shaft, and (ii) at least partially surrounds the shaft.

19. (new) The method of claim 18, wherein the insulating layer and the conductive elastomer each has an opening therein for receiving the shaft; and the shaft is inserted through the openings in the insulating layer and the conductive elastomer.

20. (new) The method of claim 19, wherein the insulating layer is generally in the shape of a disk; and the opening in the insulating layer is disposed at or proximate the diametrical center of the insulating layer.

21. (new) The method of claim 19, wherein the conductive elastomer has a generally circular configuration; and the opening in the conductive elastomer is disposed at or proximate the diametrical center of the conductive elastomer.